

"Excuse me. I would like to buy some lip balm. You have 20 seconds to comply. No, I don't need a bag. Goodbye."



ROBOCOP SPECIAL EDITION

BUY IT FOR...

- ☐ PETER WELLER'S BEST PERFORMANCE
- ☐ THE 'CLASSIC' BOARDROOM SCENE
- ☐ PAUL VERHOEVEN'S DYNAMIC AND AMUSING DIRECTION

DETAILS

ON SALE 15 MAY **RATING** TBA **YEAR** 1987
DIRECTOR PAUL VERHOEVEN
STARRING PETER WELLER, NANCY ALLEN, DAN O'HERLIHY, RONNY COX, KURTWOOD SMITH, MIGUEL FERRER
PICTURE ANAMORPHIC WIDESCREEN 1.78:1
SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1/STEREO

THE FILM

METROPOLIS, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, JUDGE DREDD, THE Terminator – cinema absolutely loves the cyborg. The fusion of flesh, blood, steel, rocket powered missile launchers, a conscience. Hence to *Robocop*. Officer Murphy (Weller) arrives at the police department in old Detroit in the knowledge that 31 cops have died since OCP – Omni Consumer Products – took over the privatisation of the police force with the view to cleaning up the crime-ridden urban jungle before starting to build the bright and gleaming new Delta City. Teaming up with gum-chewing Officer Lewis (Allen), Murphy is soon on the trail of arch drug dealer Clarence Botticker but after being cornered in a huge disused warehouse, Murphy is assassinated in an orgy of firearms mayhem by Botticker and his gang.

Murphy is pronounced dead at the hospital, but Morton (Ferrer), an executive at OCP, transforms him into *Robocop*, a rival cyborg project to that of Morton's boss Jones (Cox). However, in Murphy's new form his memories have not been entirely erased.

And 14 years on, *Robocop* remains a visceral, bloody, biting social satire that continues to work superbly on many levels. Most of the credit for this is down to the vision, perfectionism and flair of Dutch director Paul Verhoeven in bringing his first US film to the screen, and for the faultless performance of Weller in a still career-best role.

What could have been simply a bloody, throwaway popcorn *Deathwish*-style vigilante film is raised far above the ordinary by Verhoeven's love of allegory in the film (and every film since). For

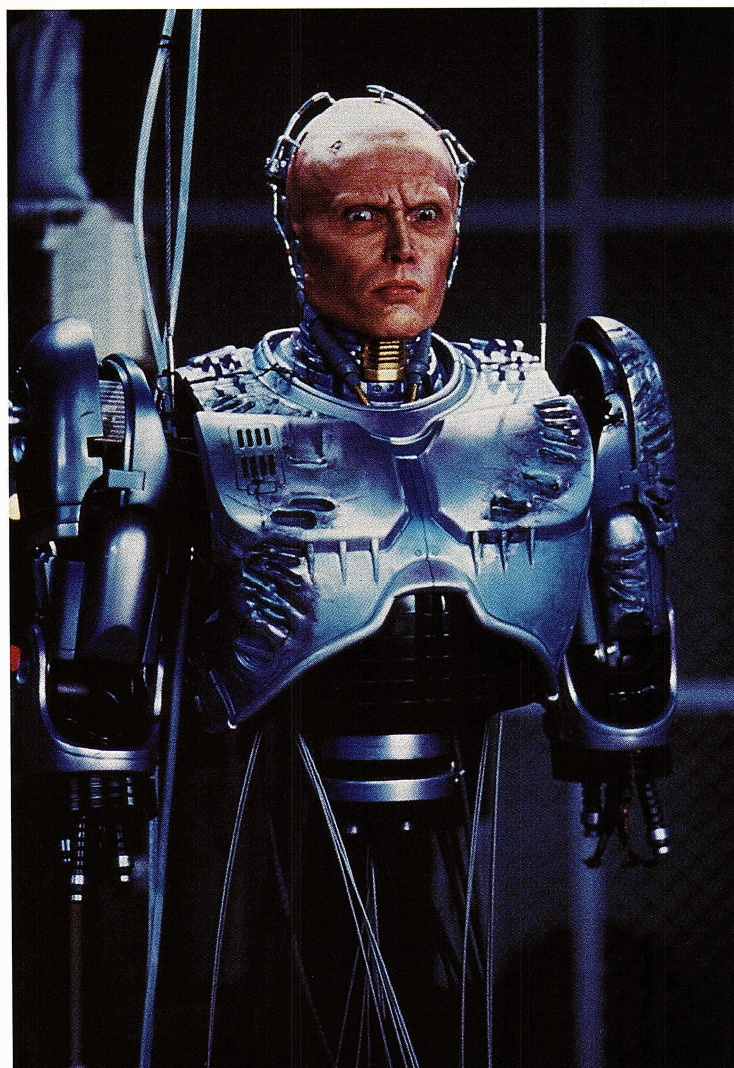
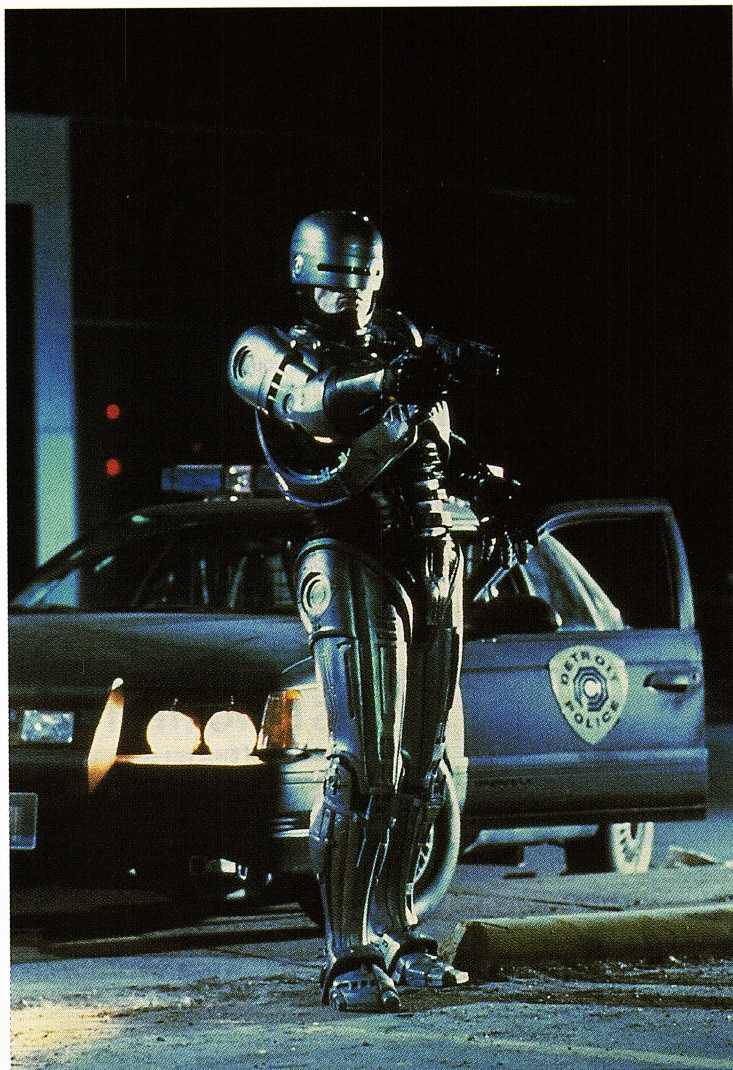
Murphy, given a Christ-like resurrection after his murder becomes a tragic hero, searching for redemption – a Frankenstein monster with the moral fortitude of a Western sheriff. Verhoeven gives us a heart with the

hardware. And Weller pulls it off. Because amid the faultless precision movements and the minimalist facial expressions *Robocop* rediscovers his humanity and

Best Bit!



I'M MELLLLLLLTIHING! TIMECODE 1:27:10
 A bad guy falls out of a vat of industrial waste only to get liquidised across Clarence's bonnet.



we cheer him all the way.

But there's more. From the funny and satirical side-long swipes at the Reaganite political era, the numerous pop culture references and homages to the influences of comic books and cinema's century-long fascination with the mechanoid, *Robocop* fuses the pyrotechnics and corking one-liners to superb effect.

And there are two versions of the film to watch – the original theatrical version and the Director's Cut (see box) with extra super duper sequences of censor-rattling blood and guts.

Add the still cool yet pre-CGI special effects, the quality cast, the bloodshed, the humour, the entirely three-dimensional central character and the film's pace, leanness and sublime cinematography, and *Robocop* is as brilliant now as on its first release.

THE DISCS

■ **PICTURE** The picture is fine although hardly exceptional.

■ **SOUND** Ditto the above.

■ **BEHIND THE SCENES** With no less than three documentaries, there is an impressive array of goodies to accompany the original film. First up is *Flesh & Steel – The Making of Robocop*, a recently made 40-minute exploration of

the film and its legacy. Featuring anecdotes and critical analysis from numerous talking heads including Verhoeven, writer Ed Neumeier, producer Jon Davison and others, this is an impressive behind-the-scenes expose of the trials and argumentative tribulations of bringing the film to the screen. But strangely, there's no interviews with any of the cast. Still, this is a quality Making of.

Then there are two eight minute featurettes made in 1987, *Shooting Robocop* and *Making Robocop* with a visibly younger Verhoeven, Peter Weller, Nancy Allen and others on-set and trying to get a handle on the film in progress. Grainy to look at, but still concise and informative, these mini-companion pieces are thoroughly deserving of their inclusion.

Then there's a six minute commentary by special effects genius Phil Tippett (who did those giant Snow-walkers in *The Empire Strikes Back*) talking us through the conception and execution of the sequences involving Robo's nemesis, the imposing ED 209. Fascinating stuff and a reminder of the brilliance of Tippett's skills as an animator in those pre-CGI days – he was left with all the hard work to do on the old stop-motion style of special effects.

■ **COMMENTARY** A fascinating and often amusing commentary. Director Verhoeven, screenwriter Ed Neumeier and producer Jon Davidson wax lyrical about the film, chuck in plenty of anecdotes about the many on-set problems, arguments and creative differences that were rife during filming. They're happy to point out the bits they think could have been improved while attempting to put the film into the context of the time and political climate. Great fun.

■ **DELETED SCENES** Four so-so deleted scenes of little inherent worth plus an eight-minute montage of production footage including sequences included in the directors cut.

■ **OTHER EXTRAS** Two trailers for *Robocop* Bizarrely, the first Robocop trailer uses *The Terminator* music.

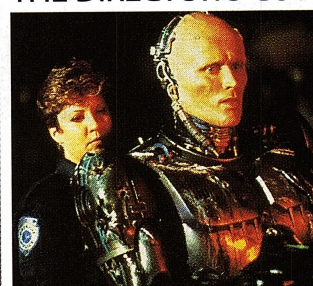
DAN RIDER

IS IT WORTH IT?

A classic original film, expansive extras with some fascinating footage of a young Paul Verhoeven and some honest remarks about problems on the set.



THE DIRECTOR'S CUT



■ In 1987, director Paul Verhoeven entered a battle of wills with the US censors over certain scenes in *Robocop*. Forcing him to make cuts, the censors inadvertently made the sequences more violent and less humorous than was his intention. The Director's Cut restores these clips of carnage and proves Verhoeven's view of the film to be the correct one. To that end, the boardroom sequence where Kinney is wiped out by malfunctioning droid ED 209 is now even longer, far far bloodier but immeasurably more amusing. We also witness Murphy's arm being blown off during the execution sequence, and when Clarence shoots Murphy for the last time, the camera tracks behind Murphy as the back of his head explodes. It may be bloodier, but the film is also richer and more complete.

↑ FEATURE FOCUS